

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues.

When the transition to digital television is complete, broadcasters will be able to transmit up to six channels where they could only air one before. Now they are demanding yet another handout from the FCC--that cable companies be required to carry all of broadcasters' new digital channels. Before handing over to broadcasters yet another giveaway, you should heed the call of Commissioners Jonathan Adelstein and Michael J. Copps and define meaningful public interest requirements that include standards for local civic and electoral affairs programming.

It's time for the FCC to ensure that broadcasters provide the information citizens need in order to make informed choices on Election Day.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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